

KENTUCKY CELEBRATES THE NATIONAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERSTATE SYSTEM

*Interstates commemorated for their
contribution to economic development*



On June 21, officials from the Governor's Office and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet joined other state and local officials at the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green to celebrate the national 50th anniversary of the interstate system.

"Interstates are the lifeline of our state and our nation," said Executive Cabinet Secretary Robbie Rudolph. "Millions of people travel through Kentucky on our interstates each year, and our location and interstate accessibility help us attract new businesses. Kentucky's interstate system plays a large role in economic development, and that's why today, we celebrate this anniversary."

"We are celebrating an amazing public works project at this event," said Federal Highways Assistant Division Administrator Dennis Luhrs. "Although the more than 46,000 miles of interstate highways are a little over one percent of our nation's roads, they carry more than 24 percent of travel, including about 40 percent of total truck miles. Interstates typically carry 26 times the traffic per mile as the rest of the road system but with a fatality rate of roughly half."

"The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet is proud to be a part

of this national celebration," said Commissioner of Highways Marc Williams.

During the past 50 years, the nation's interstate system has enhanced the economic viability of communities throughout Kentucky and the nation. Also, interstates are continuously expanded and improved upon to increase their safety and efficiency.

"Interstates and interstate signs are an invaluable asset to the tourism industry," said Commerce Secretary George Ward. "These highways allow more people to travel farther and more

INTERSTATE FUN FACTS

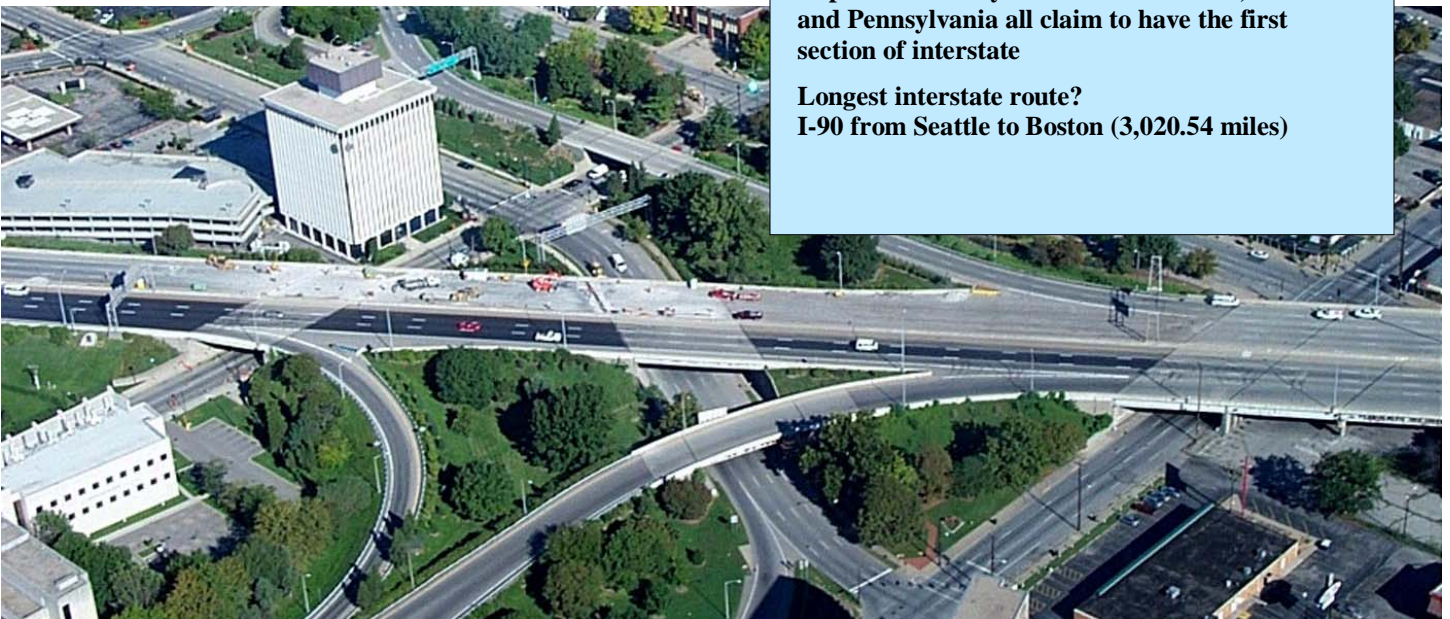
State with the most interstate routes?
New York—29 Routes (1,674.73 miles)

State with the most interstate mileage?
Texas—3,222.45 miles (17 routes)

Which interstate takes you through the most states?
I-95 (15 states and Washington, DC)

First section to be completed?
Depends on who you talk to—Missouri, Kansas and Pennsylvania all claim to have the first section of interstate

Longest interstate route?
I-90 from Seattle to Boston (3,020.54 miles)



I-65 in Louisville

safely than ever before, opening up the four corners of the country to the world. People can easily visit the beach, the mountains and tourist attractions in any part of the United States via our nation's interstates."

"The creation of the interstate system provided the United States with the first ever comprehensive standardized system of highways and signage," said Transportation Secretary Bill Nighbert. "The completion of this system greatly improved safety for the traveling motorist."

Before the development of interstate systems, automobiles were increasing in number but good roads were not. Outside of cities, motorists discovered roadways that were often little better than the dirt wagon trails that had carried early settlers across the nation.

After World War I, a young Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army, Dwight D. Eisenhower, joined a military convoy that took more than two months to cross the United States along the old "Lincoln Highway." Crawling at a speed of 60 miles per day and encountering heat, mud, breakdowns and accidents, and bridgeless river crossings, Eisenhower's 1919 convoy traveled from Washington D.C. to San Francisco along roughly the same route as present-day I-80.

The difficulty of the experience led the young Eisenhower to believe the U.S. needed an improved roadway system. Those views were reinforced during World War II, when, as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, General Eisenhower saw the superhighway system of the German autobahns and recognized "that old convoy had started me thinking about good, two-lane highways, but Germany had made me see the wisdom of broader ribbons across the land."

When Eisenhower became president, building an interstate



Officials and other event attendees cut a ribbon opening the road to future success and growth of Kentucky's interstate system.

highway system which would tie the nation together became a focus of his domestic policy. He signed the bill that started the construction of a National System of Interstate and Defense Highways on June 29, 1956.

Kentucky has benefited from the wisdom of these "broad ribbons across the land." Kentucky has nine interstate highway routes (I-71, I-75, I-64, I-65, I-24, I-275, I-471, I-264, and I-265) with a total mileage of 772 miles. Fifty years later, in today's global economy, the interstate plays a vital role in the effort to get goods and people where they need to go.

"Kentucky has long been a crossroads for itinerant people from all over the world," said Sylvia Lovely, executive director for the Kentucky League of Cities. "From the adventures of frontiersmen to the advances of modern technology, trails be-

came highways and those best traveled, became interstates. These meandering arteries have helped Kentuckians compete in the current market place and provided countless jobs for generations of our people. It is exciting to see where these well-graveled roads that once took Kentuckians away are now bringing them back home."

Charles Lovorn, executive director for the Kentucky Association of Highway Contractors pledged to continue the hard work and coordination needed to maintain and expand Kentucky's interstate system.

Wendell Strode, executive director for the National Corvette Museum, said that the interstate is essential to driving museum attendance. "Many of the museum's 150,000 visitors annually stop because of the museum's proximity to I-65."

